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Although Dutch students are generally perceived as having a good command of general English language skills, there is an increasing awareness that command of academic English, especially in writing, is an area in which much could be gained. More and more universities in the Netherlands offer academic writing courses, either as part of the master course or as an optional supplement to the core courses at bachelor level. It is important therefore to describe systematically how Dutch advanced learner language differs from native speaker professional writing and, subsequently, investigate what the outcome of this comparison implies for Dutch EAP pedagogy.

Using the CEFR's C1/C2 levels as a starting point and corpus linguistics as its methodology, this thesis investigates the overuse and underuse that occurs in advanced Dutch learner writing and finds four dimensions across which the discourse competence of advanced Dutch learner writers could be further developed. An analysis of academic writing textbooks reveals that not all four dimensions receive the same amount of attention in existing EAP materials. Future EAP pedagogical materials might use these four dimensions of discourse competence as a guiding principle to help bridge the gap between what learners are capable of and the intended proficiency.

The research reported in this dissertation is of interest to curriculum designers, authors of academic writing textbooks and anyone who has a professional interest in the CEFR, as well as researchers working in the fields of second language acquisition, EAP, corpus linguistics, writing theory, and advanced learner writing.

ADVANCED LEARNER WRITING

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PHILIP SPRINGER

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